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LISKEARD RURAL DISTRICT  
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THE  
ANNUAL REPORT  
OF THE  
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH  
For the Year 1948.

LISKEARD :  
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# LISKEARD RURAL DISTRICT

## THE ANNUAL REPORT

### OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1948.

*To the Chairman and Members of the  
Liskeard Rural District Council.*

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Mr. CHAIRMAN, Mrs. STUART, and GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1948. Judged by vital statistics of Births, Deaths, and Infectious Diseases the health of the community in the Liskeard Rural District has on the whole been up to the average of that prevailing in England and Wales. No outbreaks of a major infectious disease were experienced. The total number of infectious diseases notified rose from 245 in 1947 to 276 in 1948. The rise was caused by increased notification of measles, and whooping cough.

As far as the administrative aspect of Public Health work in the Rural District was concerned the year 1948 was marked by two radical changes :—

(1) The National Health Service Act, 1946, came into operation on the Appointed Day, 5th July, 1948. By virtue of this all hospitals came under the control of the South West Regional Hospital Board, the duty of providing services under Part III of the Act devolved upon the Cornwall County Council, and all actively practising general medical practitioners and dentists in the Rural District came within the scope of Part IV of this Act.

(2) The arrangement whereby the duties of Medical Officer of Health of the Rural District were carried out in a part-time capacity by Dr. E. S. Toogood, came to an end, and this appointment was combined with those of five neighbouring County Districts in South-East Cornwall, and with the appointment of Assistant County Medical Officer. The duties of the latter appointment relate to the detailed day to day administration of schemes formulated by the County Council under Part III of the National Health Service Act, 1946. Those parts of these schemes which have special reference to the Rural District will be dealt with in the body of my report.

I have to acknowledge my thanks to your previous Medical Officer of Health, Dr. E. S. Toogood, to the Sanitary Inspector, Mr. G. Rogers, and to those members and officials of the Rural District Council who assisted me in taking over, and becoming familiar with the duties and responsibilities of the appointment of Medical Officer of Health.

I have the honour to be,

Mr. Chairman, Mrs. Stuart, and Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

P. J. FOX,

Medical Officer of Health.

## Liskeard Rural District.

Area of Rural District	...	...	104,803 acres.
Registrar-General's Estimate of the 1948			
Resident Population	...	...	14,120
Number of Inhabited Houses	...	...	4,906
Rateable Value of Rural District	...	...	£62,585
Sum represented by Penny Rate	...	...	£260

### Vital Statistics for 1948.

LIVE BIRTHS—			<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Legitimate	...	...	111	112	223
Illegitimate	...	...	10	11	21
			<hr/> 121	<hr/> 123	<hr/> 244

### Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales

Birth-rate per 1,000 of population	17.3	17.9
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STILL BIRTHS—			<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
Legitimate	...	...	4	4	8
Illegitimate	...	...	—	1	1
			<hr/> 4	<hr/> 5	<hr/> 9

### Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales

Still Birth rate per 1,000 of population	0.64	0.42
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DEATHS—	<i>Male.</i>	<i>Female.</i>	<i>Total.</i>
	88	102	190

### Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales

Death-rate per 1,000 of population	13.5	10.8
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## Deaths attributed to Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Puerperal State.

### Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales

Maternal mortality rate per 1,000 total births	Nil	1.02
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### DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE—

All causes	6
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### Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales

Infant Mortality rate per 1,000 Live Births	25	34
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DEATHS FROM ENTERITIS AND DIARRHOEA UNDER TWO YEARS OF AGE—

**Liskeard Rural District      England and Wales**

Death-rate per 1,000

Live Births                      Nil                      3.3

**Principal Causes of Death at all Ages.**

Heart Diseases	...	...	...	...	71
Cancer (all sites)	...	...	...	...	33
Intra-cranial Vascular Lesions (stroke)	...	...	...	...	21
Respiratory Diseases	...	...	...	...	16
Kidney Diseases	...	...	...	...	9
Circulatory Diseases	...	...	...	...	6
Suicide and other Violence	...	...	...	...	5
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	4
Diabetes	...	...	...	...	4
Birth Injuries and Infantile Diseases	...	...	...	...	4

**General Provision of Health Services for the Rural District.**

*(a)* HOSPITAL SERVICES.

There are no hospitals in the Rural District. The population is served by hospitals situated in Liskeard Borough, Plymouth, Truro and Bodmin. Very limited accommodation for chronic and aged sick persons is available at Lamellion Hospital, Liskeard.

*(b)* LABORATORY SERVICES.

No Public Health Laboratory exists nearer than Exeter. The functions of this Service are carried out by the Pathological Department, Royal Cornwall Infirmary, Truro under the direction of Dr. F. D. M. Hocking.

Chemical analyses are carried out by Messrs. Hehner & Cox, Public Analysts, London.

*(c)* SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE CORNWALL COUNTY COUNCIL UNDER PART II OF THE NATIONAL HEALTH SERVICE ACT 1946.

(1) CARE OF MOTHERS AND YOUNG CHILDREN. Because of the scattered nature of population in the Rural District the bulk of the service under this head is given by Health Visitors, and District Nurse-Midwives who visit in the home. For those expectant or nursing mothers who require special attention, and advice, which neither the family doctor nor the nurse feel capable of giving, a weekly ante-natal clinic is available at the Coronation Welfare Centre, Liskeard.

Only one Infant Welfare Centre operated in the Rural District during 1948. This was at Polperro, and here the attendance per session was so poor, averaging only 8 children, that it was discon-

tinued from the end of December, 1948. A priority dental service operated by the School Dental Service is available for expectant and nursing mothers, and children of pre-school age but demand on this part of the service had been very small.

(2) MIDWIFERY SERVICE. Domiciliary midwifery is carried out by some 9 District Nurse-Midwives working from various centres throughout the District. During the year they attended some 92 confinements, and carried out some 2,600 visits in connection with this service. In cases where abnormal obstetric conditions, unsuitable home conditions, or any other reason made confinement at home inadvisable, arrangements were made for the confinement to take place at Polvellan Maternity Home, Looe, Redruth Hospital or the City Hospital, Plymouth.

(3) HEALTH VISITING SERVICE. General Health Visiting has been carried out by the District Nurse-Midwife. During the year the nine employed in the Rural District carried out some 3,400 health visits. Specialised health visiting which is required in certain cases has been undertaken by Miss Phillips, Q.N.S., H.V.

(4) HOME NURSING SERVICE. This, in addition to midwifery and health visiting, has been carried out by the District Nurse-Midwife. During the year some 11,700 visits connected with this service were undertaken.

(5) AMBULANCE SERVICE. The greater part of the Rural District has been served by the ambulance car stationed at Liskeard, though in the parts adjacent to Looe and Callington, ambulance cars from those stations have also dealt with patients. The service given by these stations has been satisfactory and there is no necessity to station any ambulance car at any place in the Rural District. The following details in respect of the Liskeard and Looe ambulance cars are given since many of the patients handled were residents of the Rural District :—

	PATIENTS HANDLED.	MILES TRAVELLED.
Liskeard	331	9,525
Looe	167	7,219

(6) PREVENTION OF ILLNESS, CARE AND AFTER-CARE SERVICES. The main preventative measures against illness have continued to be immunisation against diphtheria and vaccination against smallpox, the former from the family doctor or at Infant Welfare Clinics, the latter from the family doctor only. The response to vaccination has been most indifferent and is likely to deteriorate further now that it is completely optional. The response to diphtheria immunisation was more encouraging and the percentage of children below the age of five protected against this disease is in the region of 75%. During the year 194 children received primary inoculation against diphtheria and 38 received reinforcing doses.



Because of the scattered nature of the population and the lack of suitable facilities it has not been possible to engage in measures of health education and propaganda aimed at the prevention of disease.

As far as care and after-care of illness was concerned the demand for services under this head was not great. During 1948, one case of tuberculosis was in receipt of grants to enable them to purchase extra nourishment.

(7) HOME HELP SERVICE. Again because of the scattered population in the Rural District it has not been possible to operate this scheme. Occasionally where problems of travelling etc., could be overcome, home helps have been provided from Liskeard Borough for special cases in the Rural District.

MISCELLANEOUS OTHER SERVICES. Chest, Orthopaedic, Ear, Nose and Throat, Ophthalmic, Speech Therapy and Psychiatric Clinics are held periodically either at regular intervals or as required at the Coronation Welfare Centre, Liskeard. Except for Chest and Psychiatric Clinics the bulk of patients attending these clinics are school children.

#### PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

As compared with 1947 when a total of 245 cases of infectious diseases were notified, the notification of 276 cases during 1948 represents moderately increased prevalence. There was a moderate increase in measles, and a small increase in whooping cough. Scarlet fever, pneumonia, infantile paralysis and diphtheria showed a reduction. There were four deaths from pneumonia and one death from whooping cough. The following are details of the various infectious diseases notified during 1948 :—

		<i>Rates per 1,000 of population.</i>	
		<i>Liskeard R.D.</i>	<i>England and Wales.</i>
Measles	157	11.15	9.34
Whooping Cough	91	6.46	3.42
Pneumonia	13	0.92	0.73
Scarlet Fever	9	0.64	1.73
Erysipelas	2	0.14	0.21
Diphtheria	1	0.07	0.08
Ophthalmia			
Neonatorum	1	0.07	not recorded.
Acute Poliomyelitis	1	0.07	0.04
Malaria (relapse)	1	0.07	not recorded.

Cases of infectious disease requiring hospital treatment are admitted to the Isolation Hospital, Truro.

TUBERCULOSIS. During 1948, 9 notifications in respect of new cases of tuberculosis were received. There were two deaths from respiratory tuberculosis and two from non-respiratory tuberculosis, during the year. The following table shows details of new cases and mortality from tuberculosis during 1948 :—



<i>Age Period</i>	<i>New Cases</i>		<i>Deaths</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
0—1	—	—	—	—
1—5	—	—	—	—
5—15	1	—	—	—
15—45	7	1	1	—
45—65	—	—	—	—
65 and upwards	—	—	—	—

At the end of 1948 there were 54 known cases of tuberculosis resident in the Rural District. Of these 42 were respiratory tuberculosis and 12 were non-respiratory tuberculosis.

Suspected and established cases of tuberculosis all seen by the Chest Physician, Dr. Cairns, at the Chest Clinic, Cottage Hospital, Liskeard on the 1st, 3rd and 5th Tuesdays of each month. Sanatorium accommodation for tuberculosis cases continues to be difficult, and will remain so until building and staffing of additional accommodation can be completed.

NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948. Under the provisions of Section 47 of this Act the Rural District Council is required to take action in connection with the securing of care and attention for persons who for various reasons are unable to adequately care for themselves. No action under this section of the Act was called for during 1948.

WATER SUPPLY. On the whole the Rural District is badly served with piped water, only six public supplies being in existence—at Polperro, St. Cleer, Tremar Coombe, Menheniot, St. Neot and Polruan, not all these are adequate. The remainder of the inhabitants of the Rural District are dependant on small and not very satisfactory piped supplies or on private wells. The provision of ample supplies of pure piped water is not only technically difficult, but also financially burdensome in sparsely populated rural areas. It is however hoped that the scheme to combine with other local authorities in the promotion of a large-scale project to use the river Fowey as a source of supply will eventually provide piped water to most of the centres of population in the Rural District. The Sanitary Inspectors report gives in much greater detail the matters dealt with in endeavouring to provide water supplies throughout the Rural District.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE. As with water supply and perhaps as a result of the generally unsatisfactory water supply, drainage and sewerage throughout the Rural District is primitive and inadequate. There is only one public disposal plant—at Pelynt. For the remainder of the Rural District use of cesspits, septic tanks and disposal of crude sewage to streams, the sea or over land is the normal procedure. Proposals to improve this

unsatisfactory state of affairs have been put forward in respect of certain parts of the Rural District, but as with water supplies, the provision of adequate sewage disposal is an expensive solution.

**DISPOSAL OF HOUSEHOLD REFUSE.** This is collected weekly throughout the District. Collected Refuse is disposed of by partially controlled tipping into disused quarries at places where the nearest dwelling is remote from any nuisance which would arise.

**FOOD POISONING.** No outbreaks of food poisoning were notified during 1948.

**HOUSING.** In spite of difficulties arising from lack of piped water supplies, and sewage disposal arrangements, some 33 houses were completed during the year, and a further 32 were in course of erection. Many of the older houses and cottages are below standard and should be demolished, but such drastic action cannot be taken until satisfactory accommodation can be found for the occupants.

**FACTORIES ACT, 1937.** Although the total number of factories in the Rural District coming within the scope of this Act—some 108 in all—is larger than one would expect in a rural area, none of these factories is large either physically or in the number of persons employed. No difficulties have arisen under this head in 1948.

**SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT.** The report by Mr. G. Rogers, M.R.S.I., M.S.I.A., Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector which follows discusses in greater detail many of the matters touched upon in my report. Members of the Council will be well aware of the multiplicity of tasks, and duties which Mr. Rogers has so ably undertaken during the year.

## Section 5—WATER.

**QUANTITY.** During the year 1948 acute water shortage was experienced at Polruan in the Parish of Lanteglos. The main valves were closed at night during the whole of the summer in order to conserve the limited supply as far as possible. Pumping from a privately owned bore hole was continued until late in the year, and during that period the supply from the public source at Vevery was negligible. The relaying of all the mains in Polruan is about to be commenced and whilst this will not provide a larger supply of water, it will prevent loss by leakage and should allow for better distribution.

At Menheniot the water in the reservoir dropped to a low level during the summer, but the supply was maintained by fitting a small, electrically driven pump which drew water from the well at the source at a rate which was found adequate to meet demands.

At Polperro, the level in the reservoir was unusually low during the summer, and tests were made of the reservoir and mains. Bad leaks were found in both, and when repaired, the water rose to overflow level in a short space of time.

In other parts of the District no shortages were reported.

**QUALITY.** Samples of water from four public supplies were taken during the year. These were from the villages of Polperro, St. Cleer, Pelynt and St. Neot. Of these, the Analyst's reports indicated that two were suitable for domestic purposes, the supply at St. Neot being very satisfactory, and that at Polperro, although not of quite so good quality, was still of sufficiently good standard to be fit for drinking.

At Pelynt and St. Cleer however, the supplies were unsatisfactory, as there was definite evidence of surface pollution. In both cases it was necessary for warning notices to be posted in the villages warning consumers to boil the water before drinking.



Investigations as to the causes of the pollution were carried out and at Pelynt the supply was opened and traced back. A tank, previously unknown, was found, and it was necessary to thoroughly cleanse it and at the same time to repair the culvert carrying the spring water. This work had the desired effect, as a further sample of the water proved to be satisfactory.

Similar work at St. Cleer was found to be necessary, and it is hoped that the proper collection and protection of the springs, together with the renewal of some piping—which is now in hand—will have as beneficial effect as at Pelynt.

Following a request from the Ministry of Health, a sample of water was taken from the private supply to South Hill House. The water was found to be unsatisfactory, as the presence of *Bacillus coli* in large numbers indicated pollution from faecal matter. All possible precautions, including the cleansing of the well, building around the top with concrete, and the fencing off of an area to prevent cattle having access to the vicinity of the well, were carried out, but in spite of this the water still continued to be unsatisfactory.

The occupants of South Hill House have been informed of the necessity of boiling the water before drinking as a permanent measure.

No waters, as sampled, gave indication of being plumbo-solvent, and therefore no precautions have been necessary to prevent action upon lead pipes.

The Parishes in which one or more Villages are provided with a piped water supply are shown below and comprise ten out of the twenty-one parishes forming the Liskeard Rural District. No great progress has been made with regard to the District Water Scheme although a preliminary meeting with representatives of the Liskeard Borough Council indicated that the two Councils would be willing to come to terms over the source of a supply which would be capable of supplying the greater part of the Rural District.

Parishes with one or more Villages having a piped water supply :—

<i>Parish.</i>	<i>Pop. of Parish.</i>	<i>Pop. supplied direct to houses.</i>	<i>Number supplied from stand Pipes.</i>
Broadoak	209	40	nil.
St. Cleer	1485	850	37
Lansallos	1424	1237	nil.
Lanteglos	1320	1000	150
Linkinhorne	1139	30	50
Liskeard	922	nil.	300
St. Martin	283	100	nil.
Menheniot	1089	200	50
Morval	530	10	nil.
St. Neot	918	140	100

The piped water supplies in the villages of St. Cleer and Menheniot were found to be unsatisfactory inasmuch that certain parts of both villages were unable to obtain regular and sufficient supplies and the pressure was always inadequate. Examinations of the mains revealed certain branches to be very badly encrusted and it was necessary to renew them. The distribution throughout both villages was greatly improved.

#### *Section 6—DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.*

No new sewers or important additions to existing sewers were constructed during the year, and only repairs of a minor nature were necessary to be carried out.

The sewage disposal works at Pelynt are being completely overhauled. New filtering media has been provided, and the fitting of new spraying tubes and control valves is in hand.

#### *Section 7—MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.*

There is no licensed Government Slaughter house within the Liskeard Rural District and the only slaughtering now done is that of pigs for owner consumption and casualties, the carcasses of the latter being removed to the Government Slaughter House in the Borough of Liskeard.

Inspections have been made of all shops and stores in the Rural District where food, including meat, is stored or offered for sale. On thirty-six occasions food was found to be unfit for human consumption and 808 tins were surrendered and destroyed in addition to quantities of tea, dried fruit and crushed malt.

During 1948 there were 19 premises registered for the sale of Ice Cream. Each was inspected when necessary and found to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

#### *Section 8—FOOD POISONING OUTBREAKS.*

There have been no cases of food poisoning in the Liskeard Rural District during the year.

#### *Section 9—HOUSING.*

The Council's post war Housing programme continued during the year. A total of 33 houses were completed and a further 32 were in course of erection. In addition, the selection of sites for future development was maintained, but, as in 1947, this matter was made difficult by the lack of piped water supplies in many parts of the district.

The Council's Housing Estate now numbers 224 houses and these have been inspected regularly and maintained in a satisfactory state. In addition, 482 houses, suitable for occupation by the working classes, have been inspected in detail under the Rural Housing Survey. These have been placed under various categories dependant upon their condition and when the survey is completed, a complete picture of these houses will be available.



# Section 10—Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

## INSPECTIONS for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors).

<i>Premises</i>	<i>M/c line No.</i>	<i>Number on Register</i>	<i>Inspections</i>	<i>Written notices</i>	<i>Occupiers prosecuted</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities ... ..	1	52	41	nil	nil
(ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority ...	2	32	20	nil	nil
(iii) Other Premises in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority † (excluding out-workers' premises)	3	24	50	nil	nil
TOTAL ...	nil	108	111	nil	nil

## Cases in which defects were found.

<i>Particulars</i>	<i>M/c line No.</i>	<i>Number of cases in which defects were found.</i>				
		<i>Found</i>	<i>Remedied</i>	<i>Referred To H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>By H.M. Inspector</i>	<i>No. of cases in which prosecutions were instituted</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	4	6	6	—	—	—
Overcrowding (S.2)	5	—	—	—	—	—
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	6	—	—	—	—	—
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	7	—	—	—	—	—
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	8	—	—	—	—	—
Sanitary Conveniences (S.7)						
(a) insufficient	9	3	3	—	—	—
(b) Unsuitable or defective	10	1	1	—	—	—
(c) Not separate for sexes	11	—	—	—	—	—
Other offences against the Act (not including offences relating to Outwork)	12	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	60	10	10	—	—	—

**OUTWORK** (Sections 110 and 111)

<i>Nature of Work</i>	<i>M/c</i>	<i>No. of line out-workers No. in August list required by Section 110 (1) (c)</i>	<i>No. of cases of default in sending lists to the Council</i>	<i>No. of prosecu- tions for failure to supply lists</i>	<i>No. of instances of work in unwhole- some premises</i>	<i>Notices served</i>	<i>Prose- cutions</i>
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
Wearing apparel— Making, etc. Cleaning and washing, etc.	13	—	—	—	—	—	—
TOTAL	70	—	—	—	—	—	—









